

Why We Show Up

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As is often the case, the most poignant part of our last Young Adult Group meeting for me was the meta-conversation at the end. During this time, I reflected that I didn't resonate with the earlier parts of the conversation when we discussed the likelihood of free will and contemplated mortality. I said I was glad that the later parts of the conversation about valuing curiosity and a love of learning had happened since they spoke to me more.

I was then pushed to reflect on the way I phrased that statement and on the reasons why we show up to Young Adult Group. Do we show up only for the conversation that piques our interest? What do we think about the parts of the conversation that feel less relevant? Though I do find most of our conversations engaging, that's not at the root of why I show up.

Though I couldn't articulate it at the time, it's not so much about the content of the conversations as the community we build, particularly during those times when the strengthening of our bonds is almost a felt experience. I think we all show up to bear witness to each other's pain and learn to listen without trying to jump in and "fix it." We show up to appreciate what other people find holy, celebrate their successes, and support them, even if it's sometimes simply through our presence. We show up to practice asking those gently poking questions, learning to trust that the relationship will be able to withstand that tension. And we show up to learn to hold that tension by naming it and talking about it.

Being part of a group that shows up for these reasons feels holy to me and given that all characterized our last meeting, I'd say it was a sacred experience.

May we remember that small experiences of tension and discomfort are sometimes just growing pains. May we continue to stretch ourselves like the trees in Alfred Focke's poem, *Trees*:

upward,

downward

and with arms outstretched.